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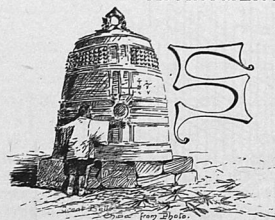
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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## APARTMENT HOUSES.

By C. C. EDGERTON.



OME considerable complaint is heard that desirable suites of apartments, at moderate rents, are not easy to find; that the tendency of building, with regard to this class of dwellings, is toward extremes; that apartments are either so large and so elaborately finished and decorated, as to rent for nearly or quite as separate houses, or else that they are little better than the better class of tenement houses. In either case they are not suited to the people for whom such houses are theoretically intended, families of good breeding and only moderate means. Our modern civilization has developed hundreds of such families in all our large cities.

The apartment house which I have in mind is something between the two that are usually found. The rooms in it must be small and compactly arranged; their decoration must be simple rather than splendid; all the appointments must be calculated for comfort and not for show. By reason of these conditions, rents can be moderate, and it will be possible to live in such a house with refinement and simple elegance.

The accommodation necessary for a small family is substantially as follows: A parlor, dining-room and one bedroom, each about the equivalent of fifteen feet square, the bedroom to have a dressing-room and closet, also another bedroom somewhat smaller, with closet, but without dressing-room; a bath-room and water-closet; kitchen, pantry and store closet, and one servants' bed-room. The height of the rooms should not exceed ten feet. To design a house with several such suites of rooms and the usual conveniences, such as storage room in cellar and attic, and accommodation for the janitor, and the necessary arrangements for heating, lighting and ventilation, would be an easy enough problem for a clever architect, and ought not to be difficult for any architect in good practice.

The decoration is a much more difficult matter. It is the rock upon which, unless great caution be used, everything will split. The danger lies in attempting too much. It should be remembered that for every dollar spent in unnecessary decoration, a proportionate amount must be exacted from the tenants in the shape of rent, if the owner expects to make the building pay. Therefore it would be well, in the decoration of this class of houses, to avoid, for the most part, the use of costly woods and elaborate carving, and to supply their place with painted wood simply carved.

I can best illustrate my plan of decoration by applying the foregoing suggestions to a suite of apartments the accommodation of which I have already indicated. Let us suppose that the parlor and dining-room are contiguous and connected by sliding doors.

The mantelpiece can be made prominent in one of three ways: by enriching the woodwork without change of colors; or by change of colors or of the manner of their combination; or, and this is the one exception to the rule of cheap woods which I think admissible in this class of houses, by making it of hard wood. I can give a very good example, that will be familiar to New Yorkers. The reading room of the old Union League Club House on Madison Square, which was generally regarded as an extremely comfortable room, was very simply decorated. The general woodwork was painted a gray color, neither very dark nor very light, the two mantelpieces were of black walnut, of very solid, substantial appearance. The furniture was also walnut, and one of the pieces was a large case of shelves, about five feet high, used for magazines, pamphlets and other such things. It stood against the longest wall space in the room. The walnut and the painted wood made a very good combination.

Regarding the choice of colors for wall covering it is impossible for me to do more than give suggestions. Merely to examine the multitudinous array of patterns which the dealers in wall paper spread out before the possible purchaser, is a tedious and often a thankless task. The selection must be made not only with regard to the excellence of the thing in itself, but having in mind the association with the furniture that is to go into the rooms, and the pictures or other objects that are to be placed upon the walls. There is, however, one invariable rule, that if remembered and acted upon, will be very helpful. This is, that there is safety in simplicity.

Any wall paper that is specially striking, that calls attention to itself as such, will certainly produce one bad result, and except upon a single condition, will just as certainly produce another. Such a paper will always be a bad background for pictures, and except it be of the richest quality, it will only disgust whoever sees it by the display of its own poverty. Therefore it would

be well to have the wall of a small parlor covered with a paper of simple design, and plain, or nearly plain, color. A figure in outline only, or else so intricate that it cannot be traced, would seem to be all the relief that is needed.

A friend of mine, whose house was decorated about four years ago, had his parlor walls entirely in brick red, a large leaf pattern being discernible, but only the one color. A very commonplace white marble mantelpiece was also painted the same red, after the fashion of the time. I do not particularly like that color, but this is a matter of taste, and there is no question that my friend's parlor walls are an excellent background for some very good pictures which he owns. Where there is such a pattern on the wall, it may serve as a hint for the designer of the dado and frieze, on which it may be delineated in color as well as form. The ground color of the wall might be some one of the natural colors of the particular flower or leaf which formed the pattern, and the other colors of the room might be such as to harmonize with this.

In a dining-room only fifteen feet square, and having beside the sliding doors, two other doors (one to a corridor and one to the pantry), one or two windows, and a sideboard and mantelpiece, there will of course not be much space for pictures. So it would perhaps be well to dispense with them in this room, except, possibly, one over the mantelpiece (which ought to be a very good one), and let the papered wall be its own decoration. So little of it will show, that it is still a background, and the same rule will apply as in the case of the parlor.

The frieze should always be bright and cheerful. It should not be heavy; a room should not look top-heavy. If the idea of solidity and strength is to be suggested by the decoration, the dado is the place for it. Paper specially arranged for dados is just now out of fashion and almost impossible to get in the cheaper grades, there being a reaction from the dado worship of a few years ago. As to whether a room should have a dado or not, there is a good deal of diversity of opinion. I am myself an admirer of the dado upon principle, and care very little about the changes of fashion in this respect. I may add that there is no good reason, so far as I know, why a room should not have its lower border as well as its upper, and there can be no question that as a matter of decorative effect a dado adds greatly to the appearance of almost any room.

Owing to the changes of fashion it is sometimes difficult to find just the combinations of color that one wants, in paper; whereas any desired arrangement can readily be painted on the walls. But I have suggested paper as the cheaper, and in order to avoid unnecessary expense, it is worth while to take some extra trouble.

I need only add that the decoration of the bedrooms and dressing-room should follow the same general plan as that of the parlor and dining-room, and that the rule of simplicity is as safe a guide in the selection of ceiling paper as in that of wall paper.

## HOW TO FURNISH A HOUSE ON \$400, WITH PRICE LIST ATTACHED.

### SECOND ARTICLE.

By MRS. M. J. DUTCHE.

THE first room is 12x15 in dimension, the walls are covered with paper of a dark cherry ground, embellished with a small design in gilt, with a slight suspicion of shrimp pink and pistache green. In the Brussels carpet rug there is a predominance of these shades, with an intermingling of pale yellow, dull red and black.

The bed is an exceedingly pretty piece of furniture. It was almost effrontery for us, with our lack of experience in brass work, to have attempted it, but we entered into the scheme of furnishing with the full determination of rendering the house as nearly perfect as possible, endeavoring to avoid all opportunities for criticism or fault finding as to our inexperience, and it is with great elation that we view our success, for we know it cannot be duplicated in our great metropolis—the design being entirely our own. The foot-board and sides are the only part of the bedstead visible; they have the appearance of being solid brass. The plain burnished surface of the foot-board is relieved by a medallion in the centre, representing Aurora as she is supposed to appear to the earth. The head is covered by a canopy, which is lined with shrimp pink sateen, stretched in close waves to the top, where they continue and converge to the centre, where they are tightly drawn together with a button; a very sheer thin batiste or mull muslin, which plainly shows the pink through, serves as a covering. The canopy is edged with a ruffle of the same, a quarter of a yard deep, embroidered with carnations in shrimp pink and leaves in pistache green; this latter work occupied a small amount of time, as it is done in the Kensington stitch, which extends the whole length of the flower.

## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

The coverlet is of pink sateen and the round bolster, of the same shade, is gathered at both ends, and is terminated with a tassel. We have dispensed with pillow shams, as they have some time ago incurred fashion's disapproval. The bureau is of the same metal, plain burnished brass, with a spray of peaches hammered in the centre of each drawer. The glass corresponds.

From the windows are suspended uniform curtains of batiste, with an embroidered vine of carnations; from each end of the pink poles long loops and ends of shrimp pink and pistache green ribbon fall almost to the sill. The mantel is small, so requires few ornaments. A large vase, filled with fragrant flowers, stands in the centre; on each side is a small vinegar jug, gilded and ornamented with a spray of painted flowers. The remainder of the furniture consists of two untufted, easy rockers, over which we have tacked pistache green sateen and surmounted with batiste, carrying out in embroidery the floral design of the room. Bolting cloth would have been preferable to batiste, but was quite expensive.

By the window hangs a quaint-looking umbrella, about the size of a child's parasol. It is covered with a Quakerish gray silk and not entirely closed; the lining seems to be drawn almost to the end of the handle and surmounted by a pretty bow; an inch down from it in the lining is a neatly worked button hole, the size of a silver dollar. In old English letters, embroidered in deep red, runs diagonally across the outside the following inscription: "Remember the rainy day." My friend's husband has promised me never to allow one morning of prosperity to pass without dropping at least a ten cent piece in the aperture, so that when that proverbial rainy day does come, they will hoist the umbrella and the shower of silver pieces will prove an efficacious protection in the storm.

We did not wish to encumber the rooms with so many knick-knacks, for a person to stumble over in the event of being suddenly called up at night by sickness—yet a scrap basket is indispensable, and it is so convenient to have a place to throw an apple core, a peach kernel, and that inevitable cigar stump must have a place, if we could only combine them and utilize one receptacle for all and stand it in a corner out of the way. How could we do it? "That's the question!" The fruit would destroy a basket, the cigar, if ignited, would be perilous; we truly realized the truth of the old threadbare adage, that "Necessity is the mother of invention"—when we arranged a gypsy's camp-pot, which is rustic and pretty, besides supplying the want for the several articles in demand. We secured an old boiling pot; it was fortunately a small one; after painting it a dark green we hung it by a brass chain between three large bamboo canes, one yard in height. It can be unhooked and washed without injury.

The next apartment opens an entirely new phase of decoration, a touch of Japanese is given us. The room is longer than it is wide, and the walls are covered with a quaint unintelligible design of strong but harmonious coloring, no frieze, but

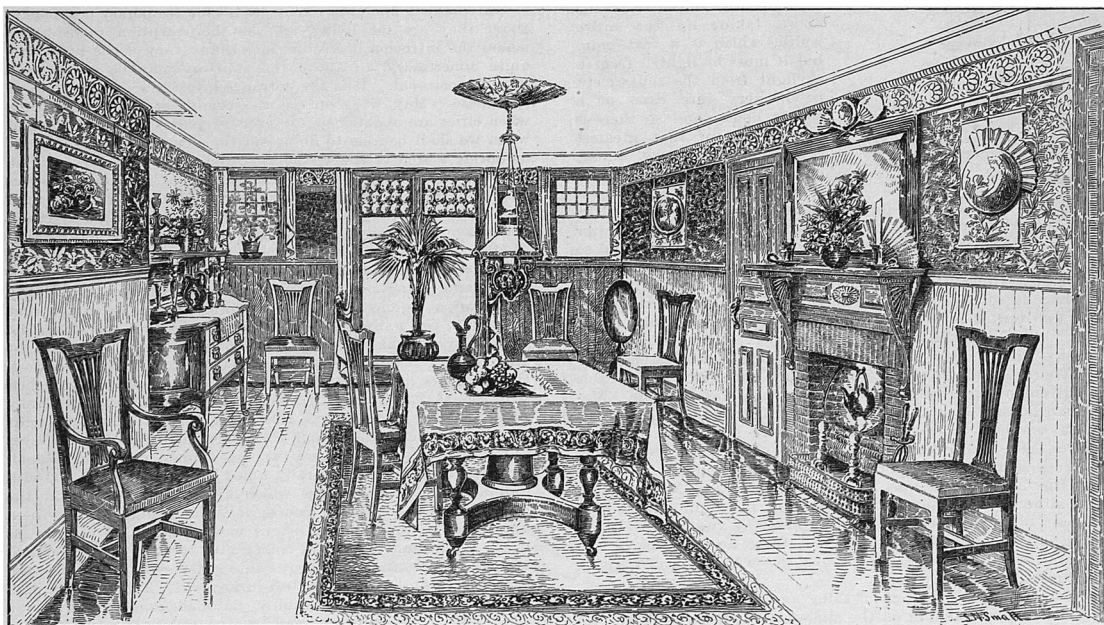
a bracketed cornice, upon which is a collection of years of articles from the birth-place of the newly popular art.

The centre-piece of the ceiling is a square parasol, from which is suspended a Japanese balloon. There are two windows, in each is shirred two shades of Japanese silk, the upper sash of one is light blue, the lower a rich orange, the second window has bright red in the upper and orange in the lower sash. This arrangement has proved a good substitute for stained glass, and emits that variegated light which gives to the plainest room an attractiveness that handsome furniture frequently fails to do. The bed and bureau are of ash, also the uncarpeted floor.

Some new design for the bed was necessary, as my friend's taste for novelty seems insatiable. After much thinking and many rejected schemes of every sort to meet the case, a suitable plan was made. The fact that the bed was scarcely three-quarters was a felicitous circumstance in our project. A very large umbrella frame was brought out from among the traps and fastened to the head-board. It was despoiled of half of its ribs, the other half was covered with silk, in which was harmoniously blended every conceivable color and shade; consecutive Mikado platings of black, blue, red and yellow, in soft silk edge, the umbrella making a rather effective finish. From the back, where the other half of the umbrella should have extended, the silk is drawn down in small, close plaits to the centre of the head-board, where a large rosette of the same silk as the plaiting gives a pretty finish. The coverlet is a crazy quilt that would have been a ravishing sight to many a Colonial grandmother. The round bolster is deep red. Our mantel lambrequin is not the least attractive of the decorations of the room; it consists of panels of cloth of old blue, black, yellow and red; in each is applied a number of letters in the Japanese alphabet; of course they are hieroglyphics to us, but nothing in the room carries your mind quicker to the land of the Rising Sun. A few chairs with Japanese tidies complete our exertions in this direction.

The next room, with the exception of the walls and floor, is spotlessly white. The former is one of those undefinable shades the nearest approach to giving expression to it is to denominate it a dull olive; here and there is an old wood cut, framed in smooth chestnut, with the rich, deep natural shades of the wood shading lighter and lighter, until lost under the soft folds of white silk, which serve as a mat, and bring out in full force the mellow shade that time has given to the subject. A little gilt on the bed, bureau and chairs give an expensive look and carry out the effect of the room, which has been destined for summer guests,—of course in the great Hegira in quest of change and country air my friend's acquaintances will not prove an exception to the general rule and neglect her during the summer.

My friend's feeling when she undertook to furnish her house upon the comparatively scanty allowance she was able to have, was one of considerable uncertainty and looked forward rather to a failure than a success in the attempt.



THE DINING-ROOM SHOWN IN ABOVE ILLUSTRATION IS IN AN OLD-FASHIONED AND OLD TIME HOUSE AT SOUTH BREWSTER, CAPE COD, KNOWN AS "GREENLAND." THE BUILDING HAS BEEN RECENTLY RENOVATED AND REFURNISHED WITHOUT DESTROYING IN ANY SENSE ITS PICTURESQUE ASSOCIATION WITH THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA.



## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

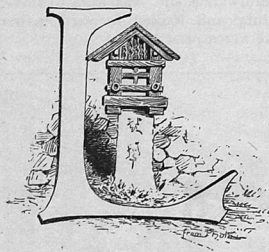
I trust he or she who has perused the above, will not experience a like sensation in looking over the memorandum of costs:

FIRST ROOM.	
Brussels Carpet Rug, at 90 cents per yard	\$10 80
Unpainted pine Bedstead	3 00
Unpainted pine Bureau	3 00
2 Window Poles	0 48
40 yards Ribbon for same, at 20 cents per yard	8 00
8 yards Batiste for Curtains, at 12 cents per yard	0 96
Carpenter for Canopy	0 75
7 yards pink Sateen for same, at 12 cents per yard	0 84
3 1-2 yards Batiste for same	0 42
Two Rocking Chairs, at sale	4 00
2 yards pistache Green Sateen for same	0 24
5 yards Batiste for same	0 24
Crewell for Embroidery	1 00
Brass	12 00
Fishing Rods for Camp Kettle	0 12
Total	\$45 85
MIKADO ROOM.	
Ash Bed-room Set	\$20 00
Silk for Umbrella Canopy	7 40
Silk for Windows, at 60 cents per yard	3 60
Four Japanese Tidies	1 00
Total	\$32 00
WHITE ROOM.	
White Bed-room Set	\$11 00
Brussels Carpet Rug, at 90 cents per yard	10 80
Three Picture Frames	7 00
Silk for Picture Mats	0 75
Carpenter for Canopy	0 75
5 1-2 yards Batiste for same	0 66
8 yards Batiste for Curtains	0 96
Total	\$31 92
Total cost for furnishing Bed-rooms	\$109 77

### STUDIES FOR THE INTERIOR DECORATION OF CITY HOUSES.

#### THE STAIRWAY.

BY RALPH A. CRAM.



LET us see what can one do with a stairway on a twenty-five foot lot? To be sure it may be placed in the centre of the house, taking up the entire width, which is a vast gain, but it must be lighted from a skylight from the top, except in the very rare cases of a corner house, and so there is no chance for that greatest beauty of a stairway, an accompanying possession of painted windows. Moreover

the centre hallway must inevitably be dark and gloomy. Mirrors and white paint are almost useless here, although better than nothing. No; as it is the case is very desperate, and so what might be one of the most beautiful features in a house becomes a thing of offense, to be avoided as soon as may be, whereas it should be in contemporary, as in the work of the last two centuries, a thing of delight, where one could linger and forget one's self in some sunny corner among cushions and flowers, with a bit of fine painted glass or a leaded casement.

There is something very fascinating and quite inexplicable about one of these rare old stairways in a Jacobean or Elizabethan house, for strangely enough the men of these times built quite the most charming stairways ever seen. Wherein the charm lies is hard to say, but it is evident and very refreshing. There is such variety, color, richness of light and shade. It is like the difference between the Fen country and North Wales. But although this charm is little known, it is quite recognized in cases of evening festivities. The stairway vies with the ball-room in its attractive properties, and there are very many who I feel sure quite give it place above the whirling and exciting but unsatisfactory ball room.

*Punch* has a very good thing on this point: two ladies house-hunting, standing on the stairway, one of whom says, "It would really be a very nice house for a party." "But are the rooms not rather small for dancing?" "Well, yes, but then you know it is such a capital staircase." They have always been

captivating ever since the time of Jacob and his ladder, and in something the same way.

Of course the objection to darkness does not hold in the evening, when the light is artificial, and so we get along pretty well, but we shall never have truly good stairways until we cast away once and forever all idea of a lot of land five times as long as it is broad. But accepting the inevitable, what are we to do? Very surely to put the stairway in a hall by itself between the rooms at the front and the rear. This might almost be taken as an invariable rule. Possibly the reaction in favor of winding and broken stairways has gone almost too far, resulting sometimes in confusion, inconvenience and affectation. Yet here, as in all else, personal fancy must in great measure govern the design. Some may favor the eminently French, palatial and stately flight ascending straight to a wide landing, from which two narrower runs mount at right angles, a balcony or a mirror filling the central wall space. Others, on the contrary, may quite prefer for a house of the same nature the winding and picturesque Jacobean stairways, up which one mounts with constant surprises. Both are good, the only difference is that on one you will feel somewhat as though you were participating in an affair of state, as though a vision of a courtly marquis or even the Grande Monarque, or a stately marshal, or possibly the First Consul, would come before you at any moment, while on the other you will know that you are taking part, not in a pageant, but in something personal, devoid of weighty dignity, but very charming and comfortable and perhaps literary and intellectual. You may take your choice. The only trouble comes when you do not; when you let your architect choose for you, and so live in a house which does not fit you at all.

Yet it may be said that there are certain qualities which should be found in any stairway, that are independent of personal predilections. Except in the most private and secluded homes there should be something architectural about the stairway, something a little formal, even constructive. For it is not a living room, it is essentially a place of passage, and except in any cosy nooks that may be connected with it and where the work cannot be too personal and delicate—should be treated as such,—broadly, that is, effectively. It is scarcely a place for exquisite detail or delicate forms. Rather should it by its apparent strength express its carrying power, and by its broad detail be calculated to impress one in passing rather than on long acquaintance, as in a living room. It seems to me that there is no place in a house where the decoration should be richer in color and more mellow in tone than here. Chiefly, perhaps, because stairways have always been so bare and cheerless. Whenever a window is in any way possible, get it; and then fill it with the richest possible stained glass, and if the light must come from the top, let the glass here be warmly colored at least, even if the exigencies of the dark hall below make deep or rich coloring out of the question. Tropical plants are good anywhere and particularly so here. They give life where otherwise would be none.

On the first floor the rooms are all for temporary occupancy, above they are for living, and as the reception room below makes the intrusion of visitors into the privacy of the household quite unnecessary, all above the stairway may be quite unreservedly personal. It is the entrance into the sacred portion of the house. May we soon see the coming of that blessed time when cities are abandoned for ever as places of existence, and when we shall be able to do as did the Pompeians, pass without mounting a step the outer rooms to the inner sanctuary, and so through to a wide, sunny court of an acre or more, with flowers and trees and fruit and birds. One would think that we had enough of voluntary imprisonment in grimmy, noisome cities, without much of anything to make life therein tolerable.

But to return to our stairway. The woodwork is of oak, stained a warm sienna, not dark, but lighter in tone than the work below, and acting as a transition from the darkness and solidity of the lower regions to the lightness above. The stonework that appears in the walls and arches and piers is of Caen stone, the walls above the high dado being of plaster, colored a warm light purplish red, neutral in color and low in tone. The woodwork that appears above at the ceiling is of oak, scarcely touched with sienna stain, framing panels of stamped leather, chiefly pale yellow and gold, and the glass itself is shades of light yellow with sienna here and there, accented by a few bullseyes of turquoise blue. The metal work is copper, with a little gold, and the draperies are generally toned to sienna, accented with dull blue and green—colors which appear prominently in the rugs on the landings. Of course it is impossible to describe a color. Take any random list of names that may describe as nearly as possible a series of colors, give them to two artists and tell them to translate the words into colors—and see what you get. Color can not be described in any way. Translate Turner's "Aggripina" or "Sun of Venice" into adequate words if you can. But if there is one point on which we in America can stand with any other contemporary country it is that of color, and if color work is to be done one need fear nothing so long as Lafarge and the Associated Artists remain in existence.